

A Socio-Psychological Triggers of Criminal Behavior Among Serial Killers Associated with Recidivism: A Case Study of Sargodha City

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Abstract: Murder is considered to be the most heinous and serious crime since it involves the unlawful killing of another person. One of the categories that is separated according to the intensity of the offense is intentional murder. Despite the presence of law enforcement and a proper legal framework, killing or purposefully injuring someone is a delicate and inappropriate conduct that has become widespread. The main objective of this research is to investigate how group dynamics and societal factors contribute to recidivism and also the internal and external driving forces behind such antisocial behaviors and the reasons why people commit such felony crimes in spite of the law and its consequences. People who engage in such practices on a regular basis known as serial killers, are basic subject of the study. The researchers selected Sargodha city as the universe of study to explore disparities in the attitudes and conduct of serial killers. The socio-psychological characteristics of murderers are investigated using a qualitative method and a non-probability sampling strategy. Criminal profiling and creating the reality underlying such antisocial behavior are two applications of the thematic approach. The results of the study demonstrate that seeking retribution is a cultural value that is thought to be essential for survival and social standing. A significant contributing factor to the spate of killings in Sargodha city is the desire for power and wealth.

Key Words: Socio-Psychological Factors, Recidivism, Social Environment, Antisocial Behavior, Serial Killers

Introduction

Murderers' psychological characteristics are a captivating and complex subject that has led to extensive research and academic debates. We must refer to the academic literature that is the basis of our knowledge as we continue to explore the human psyche. This study will join together data from other studies to highlight complex relationship between unreliable traits and homicide. Rhee and Waldman's (2002) research on the heritability of destructive behavior underlines the complex connection between environment and genes. The offender profiling study by Last and Fritzon (2005) found that money, power, and retaliation are customary reasons for murder. Holmes and Holmes (2009) provided typologies for classifying murderers according to their motivations, and the factors that drive murder have been systematically examined. These results proceed with a more prehistoric understanding of the numerous factors influencing murderers' psychology. A relation between aggressive crimes and harsh mental illnesses was found by Fazel et al. (2014), stressing the significant need for inclusive mental health care. The complicated relationship between criminal behavior and mental health is examined by Skeem et al. (2010) in order to challenge predetermined philosophy. It is essential to incorporate data from various

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studies in order to realize the implication of mental illness in link to the psychological conditions of murderers.

According to Huesmann and Kirwil (2007), social segregation joint with peer pressure is another environmental factor that encourages aggressive tendencies. People who have been discarded or debarred may turn to violent behavior in an effort to reclaim be in command or concentration. A significant factor in the manifestation of violent tendencies is family dynamics. Belonging to unusual peer groups can give confidence to violent behaviors by convincing individuals to occupy destructive strategy to fit in with social hierarchies (Schlagbaum et al. 2021).

Having a father or other father figure all the way throughout one's early years helps to keep away from the expansion of sadistic and hostile tendencies later in life, claims Sharma (2018). The deficiency of a constructive male role model in the family may lead to a negative impact that increases the likelihood of unexpected behavior. This assertion aligns with other general psychological theories that highlight the critical role that supportive parents play in shaping a child's emotional and cognitive development. An environment that is conducive to aggressive behavior is created by poverty, discrimination, and limited access to education and career opportunities. People may resort to violence in response to perceived injustices because they feel frustrated and powerless in these situations (Holmes and Holmes 2012). Study by Holmes and Holmes (1998), the greater part of serial Killers are the offspring of unattached parents, implying that growing up in a nontraditional family may increase an individual's proclivity for aggressive activities. An unbalanced household can create an unstable environment, which can negatively impact a child's psychological health. This approach emphasizes the importance of investigating family unit dynamics and how a damaged family structure may have contributed to the construction of serial killers. The literature has found other psychological aspects, such as early adoptions, childhood humiliation, maltreatment, and abandonment, even though rejection is commonly cited as a contributing factor (Alley and associates, 2014). This study examines the impact of toxic and unstable connections during upbringing on the ability to form expressive attachments, with a focus on the role played by physical and emotional exploitation. Adversities in early childhood, such as humiliation, neglect, and abandonment, have been shown to have a substantial effect on a person's development and may hinder the formation of healthy emotional bonds. Alley (2020) highlighted the connection between these early-life hardships and the later emergence of serial killers. These erratic relationships could hinder children's ability to form healthy bonds and set the stage for emotional separation. Toews (2003) contributes to our understanding of how parent-child relationships impact the emergence of violent behavior. He found that violent tendencies are more common in people with insecure and fearful attachment styles. It is possible that the early experiences of serial killers shaped their non-secure attachment styles, resulting in difficulties forming relationships and a lingering sense of loneliness that continued into adulthood, considering the significance of attachment styles in shaping behavior.

According to research by Defrezo et al. (2007), serial killers frequently have a history of physical and/or psychological abuse. They found a concerning correlation between childhood abuse and the eventual occurrence of aggressive behaviors based on an investigation of over sixty instances. This is consistent with the results of Psaila (2022), which also highlighted the importance of childhood trauma in the backgrounds of serial killers, emphasizing that people abused physically, sexually, or emotionally as children are three times more prone to act violently. The results of a 2004 study by Amdt et al. show a high relationship between the likelihood of committing serial killings and feelings of rejection. Forty-eight percent of the 62 male serial killers reported that their parents or another significant person in their lives had rejected them. Neglect, abuse, and emotional isolation are just a few of the many ways that rejection manifests itself. These negative events can cause emotional damage that lasts for a lifetime, leading to feelings of loneliness and hostility, which can ultimately lead to violent inclinations.

The study indicates that childhood strain, including embarrassment, neglect, and rejection, can significantly affect a person's growth and make it challenging for positive affection. Both Whitman et al. (2004) emphasized the connection between early childhood challenges and the later emergence of serial killer behavior. This erratic connection might obstruct the development of healthy bonds during childhood and set the stage for emotional alienation.



Arrigo (2001) found that a history of physical or psychological abuse is common among serial killers. He exposed an upsetting link between early childhood trauma and the later emergence of aggressive behaviors. The findings of Holmes and Deslisi and cardwell (2016), also highlight on the consequence of youth distress in the backgrounds of serial murders. Dutton and Hart (1992) supports the perception that adults who were badly treated psychologically, physically, and/or sexually are more likely to demonstrate excessive aggression as an adult. McGennis (2009) advances our knowledge of the ways in which parent-child connections influence the development of aggressive conduct. They discovered that those with traumatized and insecure connections are more likely to have destructive tendencies.

According to Ferguson (2014), the MacDonald Triad can be used as a notice scheme for guardians to give the obligatory support, even though it cannot predict criminal activity. Although children who reveal stress-related regressive behaviors go on to commit killings, it is essential to categorize these warning indicators so that early support and involvement can be provided. Fox and Levin's (2022) claim that it is difficult to establish warning signals for serial homicides highlights the challenges in identifying potential criminals. On the other hand, the MacDonald Triad provides external indicators of stress-induced maladaptive behaviors, but it is not predictive.

The significance of childhood markers is supported by Walters et al. (2015), who demonstrate that known serial killers exhibit these maladaptive habits. However, DeLisi et al. (2016) counseled in opposition to relying too much on research methods in criminology for sample and data limitations. They disagree with the use of dependable strategies and logic of replicate offender and highlight the requirement for a more nuanced approach. The complexity of extending the outcome to bigger criminal groups highlights how difficult the incident is to grab and calls for a case-by-case analysis of every single instance.

Objectives

1. To investigate the effect of loss and trauma on aggressive tendencies.
2. To examine the role of group dynamics and societal factors in criminal behavior.
3. To know the influence of powerful relationships which affect criminal behavior and judgment.
4. To evaluate the psychological effects of an unbalanced and impoverished living environment on criminal behavior.

Methodology

A methodology is a collection of steps used in a particular endeavor or field of study. The researcher uses qualitative research techniques to achieve the study's objective. A researcher's approach of rationally combining different study components is called research design. The researcher chose qualitative research because it offers a succinct examination of the psyche and motivations of the murderer. Exploratory research is one of the significant approach in qualitative methodology. It is used to investigate basic theories, logic, and reasons. It helps establish notions or theories for later quantitative research or makes the problem easier to understand. Selecting a portion of the population to represent the total population is referred to as sampling.

Neuman (2002) defines sampling as "a set of respondents is selected from the large population and the results are generalized to the population." To estimate the characteristics of the entire population, a subset of individuals is chosen through sampling. According to Trochim (2008), the sample consists of the actual units selected to participate in the study. Researchers used purposive sampling in this study. A purposeful sample is a non-probability sample selected based on the population's characteristics and the study's objectives. According to Djamba (2002), judgmental sampling is another name for purposeful sampling. The objective of the Interview Guide is to gather information from interviewees, which will then be subjected to thematic analysis.

Results

This study examined each scenario in detail, providing a thorough analysis and referencing previous research to shed light on the complex relationships among shocking events, psychological elements and social influences that promote criminal activity. The complex dynamics of hate psychology are observed in Akhtar Hussain's descent into a life of crime and reversal.

In particular, the murder of his younger brother while in police supervision, which stoked his irrational support for retribution, one case in point in his life story that illustrates the appalling effects of disaster. *"One cannot always rely on the legal system to bring about justice,"* Akhtar stated. Looking for true justice and personal accomplishment may require enchanting issues into one's own hands.

According to McCullough et al. (2011), people normally seek revenge as a way of attaining emotional closure after an injustice, such as the death of a loved one. This is reliable with accessible research on how mental disturbance influences criminal demeanor. Moreover, Akhtar's affiliations with criminal organizations and outcasts highlight the need for belonging and uniqueness in addressing societal injustice. Studies in criminology and social identity theory have shown that people may turn to criminal organizations for empowerment and declaration (Mabia, 2019).

According to study by Van Dorn et al. (2012) and Zagar et al. (2009), unconstructive early experiences like suffering and loss are imperative because they increase a person's likelihood of becoming a criminal in the future. Ahmed Sher's alteration from a well-liked associate of the society to an irate rebel highlights the emotional possessions of both familial conflict and societal prejudice. *"Those who you love must be addressed and removed from your life when they turn against you with malicious or dishonest motives,"* Ahmad stated during interview. According to research on relational suffering and its effects on identity, Ahmed's wish to get rid of people who give the wrong impression or harm him also points to a coping approach centered on self-defense and boundary-setting (Hare, 2003).

Research on strain theory and the psychological underpinning of vengeance suggests that Ahmed's experience demonstrates how people may turn to violence in response to feelings of injustice and helplessness (Silverman et. al, 2015). This case sheds light on the psychological underpinnings of persistent hostility by examining the vicious cycle of revenge between Mazhar Hussain and Aman Ullah. It was stated that *"Peace is impossible to attain, as in the jungle, where if we don't strike first, we are at a risk of being preyed upon"*.

This event clears that disregard of human life and power dynamics help to be responsible for brutal activities. Studies on warrior mentality highlight that peace is unattainable in those societies where power is viewed as mutually hostile and frequently encourage people to take defensive actions against previous threats (Fergusson et.al, 2005). The psychological support for safety and control serves as the institution for this approach. More research is being conducted on the psychological basics that encourage people to commend illegal acts, such as the request for money, the influence of societal pressures, and the desire for power and control.

The psychological motivation behind criminal behavior has been sufficiently confirmed by research on the "supply-side" theory of crime, which holds that people commit crimes to satisfy unfulfilled financial needs and that the sight of money acts as an influential motivator (Crego & Widiger, 2016). Furthermore, they added, *"Money is power, and power is like a drug; once you have it, you want more in a larger amount than the prior dosage."*

As evidenced by their declaration that *"Money is power and power is like a drug,"* a central concept in criminology is the desire for power. People who gain wealth or power often become increasingly desensitized and seek more extreme forms of control or wealth to satisfy their appetites, which is why behavioral psychology and addiction literature investigate the "drug-like" nature of power (Capsi et al., 2005).

Research on moral disengagement show that criminals often experience a shift in their moral compass leading them to rationalize more destructive actions (Arrigo and Purcell, 2001). These results are in line with this dynamic, in which individuals get caught up in a vicious circle of committing more crimes in an effort to hold onto their newly acquired power.

M. Iqbal's consideration also illustrates the negative psychological dynamics of control, power, and the fear of losing authority—themes that are widely studied in the literature on power dynamics and criminal behavior. Research on authority and power indicates that those who want or acquire power often experience extreme anxiety and paranoia about losing their position, which can cause them to employ dishonest or violent methods to maintain control (Anderson et.al, 2005). *"Setting up an empire is not*



exceptionally challenging, but to maintain it over time is challenging, for which you have to maintain fear, and you may kill someone or sometimes be killed," he stated. The narrative by M. Iqbal also demonstrates the damaging psychological dynamics of control, power, and the fear of losing authority—themes that are extensively examined in the literature on criminal behavior and power dynamics. According to research on authority as well as power, people who desire or obtain power frequently suffer from severe anxiety and paranoia about losing it, which can lead them to use aggressive or dishonest means to stay in control (Waytz et al., 2014).

Conclusion

The study highlights relationship among social factors, psychological factors and past traumas that affect the nature of individuals and trigger them towards criminal activities. Childhood traumas is the main contributing to the criminal behavior of serial killers. Each case in the study is related to damage and brutality, from a desire of power and control to the incredible cost of loss and misery. Examining the complex world of criminal behavior reveals many significant themes that help to explain the situation and dynamic forces underlying criminal acts. One of the most important elements of these topics is the need for recognition and belonging. Usually, individuals tolerate and even relish nasty and brutal acts. To survive in society with honor and dignity, terror is a demonstration of strength and a crucial component. The human being who has a group of people with guns draws attention and appears to be more powerful since society respects those in positions of power. Another major topic is the indefinite views of objectivity held by many people. Cultural narratives, individual experiences, and social variables regularly manipulate these points of view. Many people believe that the legal system is unjust and unfair, which makes them lose trust in it. This view could lead people to justify their unlawful actions as a form of insurgence against a system that they believe fails to effectively protect them to promote their well-being. These perspectives can serve to legitimize dishonest and callous behavior, which can lead to criminal activities.

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